

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



March 23, 1999

**ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-24-99**

**TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL COUNTY ADOPTION ADMINISTRATORS  
ALL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATORS**

**REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL**

- ☒ State Law Changes
- ☐ Federal Law of Regulations Change
- ☐ Court Order or Settlement Agreement
- ☐ Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- ☐ Initiated by CDSS

**SUBJECT: SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS PROGRAM****REFERENCE: ASSEMBLY BILL 2198 (CHAPTER 1014, STATUTES OF 1998)**

The purpose of this letter is to notify all counties that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is implementing the Specialized Training for Adoptive Parents (STAP) program pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 2198 (Chapter 1014, Statutes of 1998). The purpose of the STAP program is to establish a program for special training and services to facilitate the adoption of children who are HIV positive, or born to a substance-abusing mother.

One of many impetuses for the STAP program was the Training, Intervention, Education and Services (TIES) for Adoption program. From 1995 to 1997, Los Angeles County Department of Children Services, Adoption Division, and the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities was funded to provide the TIES for Adoption program. The goal of the TIES program was to promote the successful adoption and healthy growth and development of infants and children who were prenatally exposed to alcohol or other drugs. The Los Angeles/UCLA TIES for Adoption program has demonstrated success in successful adoptions of drug and/or alcohol exposed children who would otherwise remain in foster care or experience disruptions of their adoptive placement.

Another impetus for the STAP program was Public Law 105-89, the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 which was signed into law in 1997 and includes provisions for implementing President Clinton's December 14, 1996, Executive Memorandum of Adoption. The Executive Memorandum articulated the goal of doubling by the year 2002, the number of children adopted or placed in other permanent homes each year. Similarly, in 1996, an adoption initiative was implemented by the state aimed at increasing the number of adoptions of children who would otherwise remain in long-term foster care.

Children with prenatal drug exposure are disproportionately represented in the foster care system and may present unique challenges for purposes of adoption planning. Many of these children are born prematurely, remaining in hospitals almost five times as long as normal

newborns. Many suffer long-term effects of drug exposure, requiring special education. Many may have developmental and behavioral problems and learning disabilities for which appropriate interventions must be provided. Children who are HIV positive present similar unique challenges for purposed of adoption planning.

The STAP program is available for Fiscal Year (FY) 1998/99 to any county or collaborative counties that submits a county plan. For purposes of implementation within this FY, the county plan may be an abbreviated plan that at a minimum provides 1) a description of the population to be served, 2) a list of the training and services to be provided to the preadoptive/adoptive parents, 3) an estimated budget and 4) contact name and telephone number for staff that may be contacted for further information.

The county plan must be postdated no later than April 9, 1999. Address the county plan as follows:

California Department of Social Services  
Foster Care Services Bureau  
744 P Street, M.S. 19-70  
Sacramento, California 95814

ATTENTION: Cheryl Woolman

The CDSS staff anticipates the completion of the review/approval process by late April. Subsequently, the CDSS will provide the participating counties with individual approval letters that include the county's allocation and subsequent fiscal claiming directions. The STAP program has been allotted \$1,000,000 from the State General Fund for FY 1998/99. The county allocation and/or regional allocations will be developed on the basis of 1) the county estimated budget for the STAP program; 2) the number of projected cases of court dependent, substance-exposed and/or HIV positive children that will enter the system on a monthly basis and 3) the number of participating counties.

The STAP program is funded by a federal, state and county share consistent with the normal sharing ratio for child welfare services. Both, the recruitment and training components are funded with 50 percent/75 percent federal funds, respectively. The federally funded components (recruitment and training) will be subject to the non-federal discount rate that is obtained from the Administrative Expense Claim. There is not a federal share for the respite component as it is solely funded by state and county funds. (See the chard on the following page for clarification of the funding percentages for each of the STAF program local assistant services components.)

The estimated county sharing ratio for each component is as follows:

	<b>Federal</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>County</b>
<b>Recruitment</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Training</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
<b>Respite</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>30%</b>

Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 16135.1 states (a) “Eligible child” means any child who meets the requirements of paragraph (1) or (2), and paragraph (3).

1. *Any child who has a condition or symptoms resulting from, or are suspected as resulting from, alcohol substance abuse by the mother.*
2. *Any child who is HIV positive.*
3. *Any child who meets the requirements of either paragraph (1) or (2) and who meets all of the following requirements.*
  - (A) *The child is a dependent child of the court.*
  - (B) *The child has an adoption case plan and resides with a preadoptive or adoptive caregiver, or the plan is to transition and move the child to a preadoptive or adoptive caregiver.*

A participating county shall provide special training to recruited adoptive parents to care for eligible children. The training curriculum ***shall*** include, ***but is not limited to***, all of the following:

1. Orientation.
2. Effect of alcohol and controlled substances on the fetus and children.
3. Normal and abnormal infant and early childhood development.
4. Special medical needs and disabilities.
5. Recovery from addiction to alcohol and controlled substances.
6. Self-care for the caregiver.
7. HIV/AIDS in children.
8. Issues in parenting and providing lifelong permanency and substance abuse prevention to, children with prenatal alcohol and other controlled substances exposure.
9. Issues specific to caring for a child who tests HIV positive.

***Participating counties may provide the same special training to relative caretakers in the process of adopting program-eligible children.***

Participating counties shall prepare a services case plan that includes the STAP program services to be provided to support the goal of adoption. The services case plan shall be prepared in accordance with Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Division 31-200. The case plan ***shall*** include arrangements for ***nonmedical support services including respite care for specially trained prospective adoptive parents, including relative caretakers.*** Nonmedical support

services *may also include, but are not limited to*, temperament and behavior management training, consultation regarding medical and psychological issues and services, and educational advocacy.

As referenced in the preceding paragraph, respite care shall be part of the services case plan and funded in accordance with WIC Section 16135.10 (b) which requires a 30 percent nonfederal county share consistent with the normal sharing ration for child welfare services. The county share may be provided with county general funds, in-kind contributions, or other funds not appropriated by the Budget Act.

If you have any questions regarding STAP and/or this letter, please contact Ms. Cheryl Woolman at (916) 323-7793.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By Marjorie Kelly  
On 03-23-1999***

MARJORIE KELLY, Deputy Director  
Children and Family Services Division

c: CWDA